

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 01227 121022Z

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 /057 W

----- 122102

R 111440Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2062

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGUI

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 1227

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IV, CT

SUBJ: CAR PRESIDENT BOKASSA PAYS PRIVATE VISIT TO IVORY COAST

SUMARY: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR) PRESIDENT, MARSHAL JEAN-BEDEL BOKASSA, VISITED IVORY COAST FEB 5-8 ON WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS A "FAMILY" VISIT TO HIS "SPIRITUAL FATHER", GOIC PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY. CONVERSATIONS REPORTEDLY CENTERED ON ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS AS WELL AS REGIONAL AFRICAN MATTERS INCLUDING THE FORTHCOMING FRANCOPHONE SUMMIT CONFERENCE AT BANGUI. ENG SUMMARY.

1. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR) PRESIDENT MARSHAL JEAN-BEDEL BOKASSA PAID PRIVATE VISIT TO IVORY COAST FEB 5-8. ACCOMPANYING BOKASSA WERE HIS WIFE AND A DELEGATION INCLUDING JOSEPH POTOLOT, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, VICTORY TETHEY, PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY, EUGENE KATOUKA, DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL, AND CHARLES ONDAMAT, DIRECTOR OF THE PRESIDENT'S CABINET.

2. THE VISIT WAS DESCRIBED IN THE LOCAL PRESS AS A FAMILY CALL BY BODASSA ON HIS "SPIRITUAL FATHER" GOIC PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY. VENUE FOR THE VISIT WAS YAMOUSSOUKRO, HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY'S NATIVE VILLAGE. DELEGATION VISITED SEVERAL AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN AREA AS WELL AS HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY'S COFFEE PLANTATIONS.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 01227 121022Z

3. CONVERSATIONS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE CONCENTRATED ON COMMON

AGRICULTURAL AND DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS, COMPLICATED BY WORLD INFLATION AND ECONOMIC CRISIS. THE TWO PROESIDENTS ALSO DISCUSSED REGIONAL AFRICAN ISSUESZN INCLUDING THE FORTHCOMING FRANCOPHONE SUMMIT CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR BANGUI IN EARLY MARCH.

4. COMMENT: BOKASSA WAS WARMLY RECEIVED BY HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY ALTHOUH TONE OF REPORTAGE WAS CLEARLY PATERNALISTIC. BOKASSA WAS PORTRAYED AS PAYING ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO HIS SPIRITUAL FATHER TO SEEK ADVICE AND COUNSEL. FROM NUMEROUS REFENCES TO REPORTERS ABOUT FORTHCOMING BANGUI SUMMIN, IT CLEAR THAT BOKASSA ALSO WAS HOPING TO DRUM UP SUPPORT FOR MEETING. WE NOTE WITH INTEREST, HOWEVER, THAT DESPITE BOKASSA'S DEPARTURE STATEMENT SAYING HE LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEIG HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY AGAIN SOON AT BANGUI SUMMIT THAT HOUPHOUET BOIGNY WAS NOT REPEAT NOT QUOTED AS STATING HE WOULD DEFINITELY ATTEND.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ABIDJA01227
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750051-0123
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750255/aaaabxkg.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 30 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 APR 2003 by BrownAM>; APPROVED <22 JAN 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CAR PRESIDENT BOKASSA PAYS PRIVATE VISIT TO IVORY COAST SUMMARY: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR) PRESIDENT, MARSHAL JEAN-
TAGS: PFOR, IV, CT, (HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, FELIX), (BOKASSA, JEAN BEDEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006